

Message Text

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13-12

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TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, AU, YU

SUBJECT: SMEARING OF ROAD SIGNS AND BUILDINGS IN SOUTHERN
CARINTHIA

REF: VIENNA 7998

1. UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS, PRESUMED BY AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES
TO BE EXTREMIST ELEMENTS AMONG SLOVENE MINORITY IN CARINTHIA,
CARRIED OUT WELL-COORDINATED NIGHTTIME OPERATIONS NOVEMBER
18 TO 19 OF REMOVING OR DAMAGING GERMAN LANGUAGE ROAD SIGNS
AND OF PAINTING SLOGANS AGAINST HOLDING MINORITY CENSUS
ON NUMBER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN MIXED BILINGUAL AREAS OF
SOUTHERN CARINTHIA. REPORTEDLY ABOUT 30 ROAD SIGNS WERE
DISMANTLED AND REMOVED, ANOTHER 20 OR MORE PAINTED OVER
WITH SLOVENE NAMES OF COMMUNITIES IN QUESTION AND 6
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS (POST OFFICE, RAILROAD STATION,
MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS) WERE SPRAYED WITH SLOGANS SUCH AS
"ARTICLE 7 YES, MINORITY CENSUS NO," "DEATH TO
HEIMATDIENST," ETC. INITIAL REACTION FROM GOVERNMENT
SOURCES IN CARINTHIA HAS BEEN TO DECRY DEEDS AS SENSELESS
ACTS OF EXTREMISTS. SPOKESMEN OF TWO SLOVENIAN MINORITY
ORGANIZATIONS IN CARINTHIA, WHILE DISASSOCIATING THEIR
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ORGANIZATIONS FROM OPERATION, ATTRIBUTED ACTION TO GROWING

IMPATIENCE AMONG SOME SLOVENES TO ABSENCE OF ANY SOLUTION
TO BILINGUAL ROAD SIGN ISSUE.

2. COMMENT: ACTION TAKEN AGAINST GERMAN LANGUAGE ROAD
SIGNS AND SMEARING OF SLOGANS ON BUILDINGS IS MOST SERIOUS
INCIDENT IN SOUTHERN CARINTHIA IN LONG-STANDING DISPUTE
OVER BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS SINCE 1972 OPERATION BY
MILITANT NATIONALIST AUSTRO-GERMAN ELEMENTS WHICH RESULTED
IN WHOLESALE DISMANTLING AND REMOVAL OF ALL BILINGUAL
ROAD SIGNS IN MIXED LANGUAGE AREAS IN CARINTHIA, ERECTED
IN ACCORD ARTICLE 7. LATEST INCIDENT OCCURRED AGAINST
BACKGROUND OF RECENT DECISION BY CHANCELLOR KREISKY
FOLLOWING OCTOBER 5 NATIONAL ELECTIONS TO, IN EFFECT,
SUPPORT POSITION OF THREE POLITICAL PARTIES (SOCIALIST,
PEOPLE'S PARTY, FREEDOM PARTY) IN CARINTHIAN PARLIAMENT
THAT CENSUS OF SOME SORT TO DETERMINE SIZE AND LOCATION
OF SLOVENE MINORITY IN CARINTHIA IS NECESSARY FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF BILINGUAL ROAD SIGNS PORTION OF
ARTICLE 7. IN WAKE OF KREISKY'S DECISION IN PRINCIPLE,
LEGAL SECTION IN CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE REPORTEDLY IS NOW
PREPARING DRAFT OF LAW FOR PROPOSED CENSUS AS WELL AS
CONSIDERING OTHER MEASURES MORE ATTRACTIVE TO MINORITY
WHICH THEN COULD BE PRESENTED AS OVERALL PACKAGE FOR
CONSIDERATION BY MINORITY. EXPECTATION NOW IS THAT
PACKAGE WILL BE READY IN SPRING 1976. SPRAY CAN
OPERATION OF TWO NIGHTS AGO MAY WELL BE BEGINNING OF
ANOTHER ROUND OF "CONFRONTATION POLITICS" BETWEEN MAJOR
PROTAGONISTS IN CARINTHIA ON ARTICLE 7 ISSUE IN EFFORT TO
COMPLICATE KREISKY'S LATEST APPROACH TO DEALING WITH ISSUE.BUCHANAN

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